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Garden Cities

A WARBURTON LECTURE
DELIVERED ON 4th OCTOBER, 1901

BY

RALPH NEVILLE, F.R.C.

MANCHESTER

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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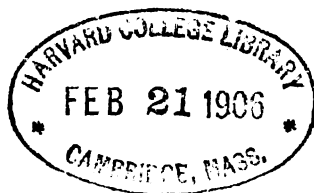
A WARBURTON LECTURE
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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1904



University of Manchester.

GARDEN CITIES

THIS lecture was delivered under the provisions of the Warburton Trust which is constituted under the Will of the late Mr. Alderman Warburton, of Manchester, who died in the year 1887, having by his Will bequeathed the sum of £1,000 to be applied by the Governors of Owens College in such way as they may deem best for promoting and encouraging the study of the best methods of Local Government and the Law, for the time being, relating to Local Government. The Council decided to devote the income from the trust partly for a prize, which is awarded every fourth year for the best Essay on some subject connected with Local Government, and partly for special lectures to be delivered on some subject bearing on Local Government.

The next award of the prize will be made in December, 1906.

Garden Cities.

SOME little time ago my old friend the Vice Chancellor invited me to lecture here upon the subject of Garden Cities. The invitation was extended to me doubtless in consequence of my connection with the movement for the redistribution of the people upon the land, as chairman of the board of the first Garden City Ltd.

I gladly availed myself of the offer, anxious as I am, not only that knowledge of the existence of the movement should be widely spread, but also that the reasons for it, and the true nature of the objects underlying it should be thoroughly understood. For the establishment of a Garden City is but the concrete embodiment of a view of the obligations and necessities of a civilised community, which is gradually opening up before our moral apprehension.

The efforts of society may be directed to one of two objects, either the benefit of some of its members at the expense of others, or the benefit of all alike. The first or aristocratic idea might possibly tend to the highest development of individuals, if man were not a moral as well as an intellectual being. We in this country are, however, irrevocably committed to the latter or democratic view of society, and rightly so, for the aristocratic view is inconsistent with the growing demands of the ethical sense of mankind; and it is now recognised that no development of the physical and intellectual powers, at the expense of the moral, can be of permanent advantage. For man is essentially a moral being. He has ever recognised an obligation to an unseen and unknown power, and finds by experience that his happiness is dependent upon the approximation to an ideal, the mystery of which he has since the dawn of human intelligence endeavoured to unravel. The mystery of the universe still remains

inscrutable, but in recent years a flood of light has been thrown upon the objects of our existence.

Why we are in the world, or indeed why the world exists, we know no more to-day than was known by the Cave and Lake dwellers of pre-historic times; but of what we are in the world for, we now know much that was hidden from the generations immediately preceding us. We know that we are here for the purpose of development.

Endowed with an intelligence which makes us the lords of a world in which development is the supreme law, we have hitherto wofully misused our sovereignty. Until recently ignorance afforded some excuse for the shortcomings of mankind, but each addition to our knowledge adds correspondingly to our moral obligation. The virtues of yesterday are the sins of to-day.

Comprehension of the laws of evolution completely reverses the aspect from which man views his world and the universe about him. He was gazing at the past—it turns him to the right about, and sets his face towards the future.

9 ~~future.~~ The light which he had been taught to regard as the after-glow from a sun that had for ever set upon this world, he now believes to be the first flushes from the rising sun of humanity heralding a glorious dawn. The laws of nature are no longer his tyrants but his tools. The instruments with which mankind is to work out the destiny of his race and of the marvellous world committed to his charge.

Everything combines to indicate that man is in a very early stage of his career. He seems of all earthly organisms the least fitted to his environment, the least effective in the exercise of his powers, the least complete in his functions; and this naturally so, since being the highest he is also the latest form of organism to appear.

Hitherto in the management of his own existence man

has in his ignorance disregarded to a great extent, the laws of health in the pursuit of his business, his ambitions and his appetites. His habits of life with regard to his dwellings, his food, and his drink have been formed without reference to their effect upon his physique, and much evil and suffering has resulted. Now if having violated Nature's laws he had left her to avenge herself, perhaps not so much harm would have been done. Nature would in her straightforward and ruthless fashion have thrust out and exterminated the victims of unhealthy habits and reckless living. But man though he cannot with impunity defy the laws of nature, can and does habitually modify their operation, and thus having by misapplication of our intelligence rendered a large proportion of the community unfit we proceed by further application of our intelligence to ensure that the unfit shall have as good a chance of survival as the fit. Thus the attitude of mankind towards natural law has hitherto been very unfortunate for himself. He has first got himself into trouble by ignoring it, and then stood between nature and the remedy she would have applied. The latter indeed he was bound to do because, as I have already reminded you, he is a moral being and from his point of view nature's remedies are immoral. It is this last consideration which renders the study of Sociology so necessary. We cannot allow nature to remedy in her ruthless way the result of the errors into which we fall by neglect of her laws. We must therefore strive to establish our civilisation upon a basis which will not involve the manufacture of victims of ill living and their subsequent rescue at the cost of the general welfare. Now this is precisely what we have been doing in the past and still continue to do. But that which in the past was a blunder, has in the light of our present knowledge become a crime.

The task which is imposed upon us by the moral

obligation to further development is a heavy one. The ignorance of the past has loaded us with more than our share of difficulty, in providing for the intelligent life of the present. We have much leeway to make up before we are even at the starting point for further progress, for we must always remember that degeneration is as much a law of nature as evolution. The complacent conviction that Nature can be relied upon to set right the results of our own ignorance and folly rests on a fundamental error. We have to find the right conditions of social life and establish them, or take the consequences, and the penalty of failure is extinction. We may retard the execution of nature's sentence, but we cannot avert it.

If then I have carried you with me to the present point, you will have realised why it is that we can no longer with easy consciences maintain the same attitude towards social questions as our forefathers did. Natural law will lend itself as readily to the fulfilment of its purpose, the gradual perfection of the human race, as to the exaction of the penalties which follow in the train of the misapprehension and misuse of it, and from this point of view the study of Sociology becomes not only important but obligatory. Man being essentially social in his requirements it is only through the scientific adjustment of the conditions of the society in which he lives that you can act upon or modify him in the mass. It is at this point that the analogy between human societies and living organisms so often insisted upon breaks down. If Society were a true organism the degradation or destruction of individuals comprised in it would be of small importance so long as the State was thereby advantaged. But man is in truth of infinitely greater importance than the form of the society in which he lives. The one is divine, the work of the Creator, the other a mere device of the creature for his own benefit.

We hear much of Imperialism now-a-days, but the foundation for Imperial thought, is the comprehension of the truth that the only legitimate object of Imperialism is the benefit of the individuals who constitute the Empire. The population over which the Empire holds sway, the extent of its territory, the military forces it can employ, are not ends in themselves but means by which the end I have indicated may be reached. The means, however, are so often confused with the end that the end itself is in danger of being lost sight of. But the true Imperialist is he who sets himself to the task of furthering, so far as in him lies, the measures which tend to the improvement of the conditions under which the individuals composing the Empire live. An Empire is of no account except in the hands of an Imperial race.

Let us therefore now turn to the consideration of the question whether the conditions of Social life in England to-day are suitable and adequate for the rearing and maintaining an Imperial race. To answer this question, it is essential to have a clear comprehension of what the proper object of Society is. It assuredly must be the development of the individual physically, intellectually, and morally, in the highest degree possible. This leads us to another question. How far in the pursuit of this object is it necessary or right that the State should make itself felt in the life of the people? Should the struggle for individual benefit be trusted entirely to work out indirectly the benefit of the social body as a whole, or should the State be a guiding, organising and directing force with definite aims for the progress and improvement of its people.

Hitherto the Anglo-Saxon race has shown a decided preference for the *laissez faire* system, departing from it in particular cases with extreme reluctance. I think undoubtedly individualism, restricted merely by

the protection of the elementary rights of others, has done much to develop energy and self-reliance in the race, but judged on the other hand by the social conditions of modern life which have developed under it, it has proved a sociological failure. The truth is that the world being a world of change, of development or degeneration, the benefit to be derived from any system must be limited in duration. Social conditions which are beneficial in one century may be highly prejudicial in the next, and the duties of the State continually expand with the growing necessities of a more complex social life.

It does not therefore follow that because *laissez faire* was the best policy yesterday it must necessarily be the best policy to-day, and indeed it has been long since recognised, however unwillingly, that the functions of the state must be extended far beyond the original limits of police and national defence. But the recognition of increased obligation does not carry the matter very far, the vexed question remains: how is the obligation to be discharged? Obligations reluctantly accepted are seldom adequately fulfilled and the efforts of the State have hitherto been confined to dealing with symptoms of social disease and have made little attempt to discover and eliminate the causes which led to them.

Let us turn our attention to some of these symptoms, investigate their causes, and see whether or no they are beyond control. I have, I hope with your approval, declared the true object of Society to be the development of the individual physically, intellectually, morally. This is not an arbitrary but a necessary sequence, for physical development did and must precede intellectual development, while moral development must be based upon, although it does not always accompany, intellectual development. Both intellectual and moral development must be based upon sound physique. Physical degenera-

tion will inevitably be followed by mental degeneration. Now if this be so it must be admitted that in a most important particular the policy of *Laisser aller Laisser faire* has in our country conspicuously failed. We wanted no commission to tell us whether or no physical deterioration existed in our great towns. No man with eyes in his head need do more than visit them and observe the working population there to satisfy himself conclusively upon that point. The fact is patent. The extent and cause or causes of the deterioration are proper and important matters for investigation. A good deal of confusion appears to exist in the minds of some people on the subject. Explanations of the phenomenon many and varied have been offered extending from over-education in the board schools to the pernicious cheapness of sugar, which it has been suggested tempts the children of the very poor to squander their ample pocket money in the purchase of sweets. But the very obvious and patent cause, the unhealthy conditions of town life, does not find very ready acceptance, possibly on account of the extreme difficulty of dealing with it. If physical deterioration be caused by cheap sugar and over-education the remedies lie ready to our hand. But if it be true that it is the result of life in existing towns it means that a great and sustained effort will be needed to put the matter right—I shall at all events assume, I hope with your concurrence, that whatever other causes may be at work, the principal cause of physical deterioration is the congestion of population in our great towns.

If this is the root of the matter it is important to consider the cause of the growth of our great towns. In the first place it is to be noted that the growth of towns has accompanied the transfer of capital and labour from agricultural to mechanical industries. This being so, it has naturally occurred to many, that by reversing the

process you would put an end to the mischief, and "back to the land" has been the cry. Back to the land by all means, but if by that is intended the hope of inducing the people in any great numbers, to relinquish mechanical industries and to return to agricultural, the hope is foredoomed to disappointment. In every country as civilisation and commerce advance, the tendency shows itself to turn from agriculture to manufacture, and why? Simply because there is a better return on capital devoted to the one than there is on capital devoted to the other, and consequently capitalists are more and more inclined to embark their money in manufacture, and less and less inclined to embark their capital in agriculture. The one is subject to the economic law of increasing returns, and the other is subject to the economic law of diminishing returns. Now labour must always follow capital. It has no effective method of controlling its application. The employment therefore of the working classes is determined by the capitalists, and (unless you can eradicate the desire for gain from the human heart) capitalists will continue to devote their capital to the employment which pays them best. Moreover, although labour must follow capital the process is not regulated with any precision, and to labour mechanical industries present a two-fold advantage, first an increase in wages, and secondly the gratification of the growing demand for the social advantages afforded by town life. The able and energetic consequently gravitate to the towns in numbers exceeding the opportunities for employment. Thus the country is left to the feeble and inefficient, and the multitude of the unemployed increases in the towns.

Now so far as health is concerned the advantages of country life over those of town life are universally admitted. The effect of fresh air in healing disease and recuperating physical force is becoming more and more

completely recognised and the inference is reasonable that the want of fresh air may induce the debility which the supply of fresh air has been proved to remedy. I do not think it is or can be seriously contested that the principal cause of the comparative unhealthiness of town life is the scant opportunity afforded for enjoying fresh air. Between the healthiness of outdoor and indoor employment, whether in town or country, there is no comparison, but indoor employment in the country is far healthier than similar employment in a great town. This is not only due to the exhaustion and pollution of the air of the cities, there are many other contributing causes. The crowding of buildings interferes with the access of air and light to the shops and offices and leads to the use of air exhausting illuminants. The same is true of working class dwellings. Moreover, while the countryman walks to his work, the townsman travels by tram or train generally under very crowded and unhealthy conditions, and, finally, the townsman has little or no inducement to take, or indeed opportunity for taking, recreation in the open air. When the matter is attentively examined the wonder is not that physical deterioration is noticeable but that it is no greater, and when to the consideration of the physical conditions of town life is added the universal ignorance of dietetic requirements and the general intemperance in the use of stimulants one realises the marvellous adaptability of the human frame to adverse conditions of existence. But this consideration must not blind us to the fact that in the conditions of life of vast numbers of the working class and of clerks and shop attendants male and female, we are confronted with a great evil. In spite of smooth sayings the physical deterioration which results is appalling; infant mortality in certain classes is a scandal to civilisation, and no man of intelligence, who will give impartial consideration to the matter, can fail to be profoundly

disquieted by the existence of the evils which I have referred to and discontented with the conditions which have led to such a result.

It is not enough, however, to recognise the evil; it is the duty of each one of us to do his best to remedy and prevent it.

If, however, it be true that the congestion of our towns has resulted from the change of employment from agriculture to manufacture, and if this change is the outcome of economic law, it would be vain to struggle against it. While manufacture remains the more profitable industry the attractions of the towns are certain to draw the able and energetic from the country, leaving a mere residuum of incompetence behind—and the only hope for the future lies in the improvement of the conditions of life under which manufacture and its subsidiary trades are carried on. Now the improvement of which existing overgrown towns are capable, is very limited. Every scheme of improvement drives the workman further from his work and adds to congestion in business districts, by increasing the costs of building sites. Efforts are made to provide dwellings within the improved areas for the working class disturbed, but it would be generally cheaper to pension for life the families displaced, while the only accommodation which can possibly be provided is in huge blocks of tenement buildings to which there are insurmountable objections from the hygienic point of view, particularly as regards the most important point of all, the health of the children living in them. On the other hand it is very undesirable that the working man should have long distances to travel to and from his work, the conditions under which he does so being almost invariably unhealthy, and his leisure being thereby unduly curtailed. The growth of suburbs too is in itself an injury to a town, removing the country further from the reach of its

inhabitants and decreasing the vitality of the air they breathe. But failing the possibility of adequately improving the conditions of existing great towns, the remedy must be sought in the discovery of some means of dispersing, or at all events arresting the increase, of their population. The possibility of this depends upon whether the crowding of manufacturers into great centres is necessary or advantageous. If it is we may abandon the idea, for manufacturers to succeed, are bound to carry on their business under the most advantageous conditions they can secure. Happily, the question has been answered by the individual action of manufacturers themselves who have in considerable numbers found it to their advantage to disperse. High rents and high rates have been found to more than counterbalance the advantages afforded by a great centre of business, for modern means of communication have reduced the necessity of personal intercourse to a minimum.

Now of course it may be said if this be so, if dispersion is going on by virtue of natural economic causes where is the necessity for interference? All would agree that where natural development is satisfactory it is far better to leave well alone. The answer is twofold. First the process of dispersion is hampered and checked by the fact that at present it is only open to manufacturers of very large means, and secondly the process is not going forward under satisfactory conditions and there is no guarantee in the absence of foresight and organisation, against the growth of evils in the future, as great as those which have resulted from neglect in the past. Experience has been altogether thrown away, if it has not opened our eyes to the undesirability of leaving national development to chance. We have tried that method and it has failed, miserably failed. It has led to the existence of social conditions which to right-thinking men are intolerable.

For the future we must form a clear perception of what we want to attain, and the conditions favourable to its attainment, and these we must spare no effort to secure. Now with regard to the distribution of the population upon the land what is it that we want? Do we want large tracts of sparsely inhabited land, where agriculture languishes and the population ever decreases on the one hand, and overcrowded centres where manufacture proceeds at the physical expense of the nation on the other hand? This is what we have got, and it is admittedly unsatisfactory. The towns already too large are continually increasing without regard to the advantage of the country as a whole. Amorphous masses of seething humanity put to shame by the domestic policy of the ant and the bee. Surely human intelligence is not incapable of devising some better way of utilising the land for the benefit of its inhabitants. If old towns are incapable of adequate improvement why not provide for the overflow and increase of the population by new towns—new towns not growing up haphazard as they do now, the owner of every plot pursuing his own advantage without thought or care for the appearance, comfort or convenience of the town as a whole—but new towns built on a definite plan for a definite purpose? There is plenty of land available. Let no one talk of England as overpopulated until he has calculated the population it would hold if that population were uniformly distributed at five to the acre, not an excessive number.

Let us consider the requirements for such a scheme of distribution. In the first place the land upon which the town is to be built must obviously be in the hands of one central organising body. Secondly that body must hold not only the land upon which the town is to be built, but a sufficiency of the surrounding land to prevent the model town from being encroached upon by irresponsible

persons. These conditions satisfied, we have in a nutshell the principle of the Garden City originally advocated by Mr. Ebenezer Howard in his book entitled "To-morrow." The benefits calculated to arise, from the the laying out and formation, of a town upon a definite plan from the first, are too obvious to need explanation, but when coupled with the ownership of the land in the vicinity of the town site, the advantages are greater than at first sight appear. A local authority thus equipped can control the size of the town by rigidly adhering to the original plan, and can approximately control the density of the population, by limiting the number of houses to be erected per acre, but in addition, a double advantage will be secured by the retention of the surrounding belt of agricultural land, for not only will the health of the industrial inhabitants of the town be ensured, as far as abundance of fresh air can ensure it, but the proportion of the population employed in agriculture will be increased, by providing an adequate local market for the consumption of what I may call the smaller agricultural industries such as the production of milk, fruit, poultry and vegetables. These smaller industries, some of them requiring spade labour, employ a large number of hands.

Now assume a distribution of the population to have taken place under the conditions indicated, and contrast the position of the working man and his family under the old conditions and under the new. If he be engaged in mechanical industry instead of living in slums or tenements, his principal recreation being found in the public-house or music-hall, he will live in a cottage in a town having immediate access to fresh country air. He can if he wishes it have a garden sufficient to occupy his leisure, and to return him a little profit in addition to his wage, or if he prefers them outdoor amusements will be ready to his hand. Beyond his actual working hours no part of his day need be spent within doors.

The most important point of all, the difference in the life of the child of the Garden City and of the slum child, I need not dilate upon; it will appeal to all. On the other hand the choice of agricultural labour will no longer involve the dullness of country life. The agricultural labourer will be able to share the advantages of town life with the mechanic. I am convinced that the redistribution of the people upon the land would do more to transform the members of the working class than any other conceivable alteration of the conditions under which they live. It is not generally recognised, or indeed I think adequately realised by any of us, what effect healthy bringing up and healthy conditions of life have upon a man, or the extent of the evils induced by want of fresh air and insufficient out of door exercise. We are apt to imagine that the symptomatic pain and discomfort which we recognise as resulting from particular diseases are the beginning and end of the matter. In my belief it is far otherwise. Unhealthy appetites are largely dependent upon the conditions of life and the habits induced by them.

But to return to the Garden City. In the case of existing towns the high value of the building sites are due to two causes. To some extent no doubt the value of the land has been increased by expenditure, but this bears but a small proportion to the total value. The main increase is the result of the demand arising from the competition occasioned by the aggregation of the inhabitants. In other words, as was long ago pointed out by John Stuart Mill, the increment in value realised by the owners of town lands is largely if not entirely unearned. It is this unearned increment which forms the financial basis of the Garden City scheme.

If a town be started upon land where no town previously existed the owners of that land will find the value very

much increased. Now supposing the land to be acquired in the first instance by trustees for the future inhabitants, the unearned increment can be secured, in whole or in part (according to the nature of the tenure under which the tenants of the land are allowed to hold), for the benefit of the town and its inhabitants. It is simply a question of organisation—the laying out of a building site on a much larger scale than has hitherto been attempted—and with this fundamental difference, that whereas hitherto estates have been laid out merely for the pecuniary benefit of the landowner, garden cities will be laid out for the benefit of the inhabitants. It is, however, obviously useless to lay out building sites unless you can get people to come and build upon them. A town is of no value without inhabitants. Moreover, inhabitants will not come without inducement. People select their residence and places of business to suit their own convenience and not that of the landowner.

The inducements which a Garden City can hold out are, however, considerable.

Many manufacturers recognise the advantage to themselves of securing healthy conditions of life for their work people. Lower rents for themselves and their employés are sometimes a matter of necessity. If they move into the country on their own account it involves an expenditure of capital upon the building of cottages and other necessities to an amount which few are willing to withdraw from their business. Moreover, they cannot foresee to what extent the conditions which attracted them in the first instance will be permanent. Now in a Garden City a great deal of the work which manufacturers would otherwise have to do, is done for them by the authorities. Moreover, the concerted movement of manufacturers largely gets over the difficulty with regard to labour, the manufacturer not being wholly dependent

upon labour imported by himself, but having a working population to draw upon. The limitation of the size of the town and the application of the increment for the benefit of the inhabitants forms, too, a security against high rates and excessive rents. The process of distribution once started increased population will be provided for by groups of towns not by increasing the density of population.

The first Garden City, Limited, has, as most of my hearers will know, been established with the object of putting these ideas into concrete shape. For this purpose we have acquired an estate of nearly 4,000 acres in extent situate between Hitchen and Baldock on the Great Northern Railway, a site admirably adapted for the purpose of a Garden City. It is about 35 miles from London and close to the Great North Road. Here we are busily engaged in developing the land. The site of the town itself will not exceed 1,000 acres, which should ultimately accommodate in comfort a population of 30,000 people. The remainder, some 3,000 acres surrounding the town, will be permanently retained as agricultural land. Applications for sites have been most satisfactory and our difficulty has been to make development keep pace with the demand, for as may be imagined the undertaking is large and difficult.

We offer the land under leases in two different forms. The first, a lease perpetually renewable, but with a rent subject to periodical revision upon a valuation of the site at its value for the time being, without taking into account the buildings upon it. The other a ninety-nine years lease in the usual form. Both forms of lease, of course, contain covenants restricting the use of the land in conformity with the objects in view. It is obvious that under the ordinary form of lease the increment obtained for the benefit of the inhabitants is confined to that which has

arisen at the date of the lease. In a first experiment it proved necessary, however, to offer this alternative, inasmuch as the unaccustomed form of the revisible lease placed obstacles in the way of obtaining the advances, which would be required by many of those undertaking to build upon the estate. Another objection to the revisible lease is that development necessarily takes time, and the rents are lowest when money is most needed by the developing company, and highest when they have become a matter of minor importance. When confidence has been established in the success of the undertaking both these objections to the revisible lease should disappear. The dividend payable to the shareholders is limited to 5 per cent.

I have been able only to give a slight sketch of the present position of the first endeavour to place the distribution of the industrial population upon the land upon a scientific footing. In a very short time we hope to present to the country an example of a Garden City in full swing. It is obvious, however, that unaided individual effort cannot do more than give an object lesson. If the matter is to be followed up assistance must be had from the State. The initiative nevertheless might still be left to individuals. Schemes for garden cities showing the area proposed, the number of inhabitants to be provided for, and the limit of the dividends to be paid to the undertakers, after approval of the Board of Trade, should be laid before Parliament in the form of Provisional Orders, and Compulsory Powers of purchasing land under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act should be given to the undertakers. Our own experience has shown the difficulty of acquiring a suitable site by private contract, and without compulsory powers the difficulty of extending the scheme when the first Garden City became full might prove insuperable. Indeed, if the importance of the

subject is generally realised and the Garden City proposals are accepted by the public as the appropriate means of securing the distribution of the industrial population upon the land, it will be possible to go further and to purchase and hold large tracts of land suitable for the establishment of industrial towns as crown lands to be sold or leased upon terms which would cover their cost, or the interest upon their cost, as the case might be. We are carrying on the work in the hope and belief that our practical experiment will open the eyes of the public to the utility of our methods for ensuring healthy conditions of labour to the operative classes, and to the great advantage to civil life which must result from the laying out of towns scientifically upon a predetermined plan, by companies which are in fact trustees for the benefit of the future inhabitants.

There is no necessity at the present time for interference with individual effort generally or for the substitution of collective effort for it, but there is a crying need for the organisation of individual effort. Experience has already shown that unorganised competitive individualism has in some respects had a disastrous effect upon the general welfare of the nation. However distasteful it may be to those educated in the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race the situation must be faced and the fact recognised that the future is for the nations which are capable of collective organisation. And the occasion with us is, as I have already shown, a crying one. Men's minds at the present time are appalled at the destruction and suffering now running riot in Manchuria. Without the least desire to minimise the horrors of war, I venture to say that the evils existing at home under our own eyes are more horrible still. It is only habit which enables us to tolerate them. War's victims are counted by their tens of thousands, the victims of our social errors by their hundreds of thousands.

To be from birth deprived of all chance of an adequate existence, to be condemned to go through life stunted and undeveloped, physically, mentally, and morally, is a far worse fate than to suffer wounds and death upon the battlefield. That any of our fellow-countrymen and women should be so condemned is wholly unnecessary. We are apt to throw the responsibility upon Providence but in truth the fault lies with ourselves. the social conditions which lie at the root of the matter are not founded upon natural or divine law, they are not matters of necessity but solely the work of men's hands and brains. God did not make men rich and poor as is so often alleged—He made them unequal in capacity it is true, and in endeavoring to obviate the full effect of that natural inequality man has invented laws and institutions by which he not only evades its consequences but frequently succeeds in putting the last first and the first last. However necessary and right these laws and institutions may be we must watch and control their operation lest they wreck the lives of masses of our fellow-countrymen. It is not equality that we must aim at, equality of opportunity is what is wanted, and we must not rest till every British child is afforded a full opportunity for physical, mental, and moral development. That our slum children have that opportunity now it would be absurd to contend. We must free our civilisation from this reproach.

Twenty weary years of reaction is surely enough and more than enough for a generation. Whether we are dubbed Liberals or Radicals, Unionists or Tories, we must rouse ourselves to a sense of our social obligations, lest the beginning of the twentieth century leave no better historical record than the closing years of the nineteenth. We can no longer plead ignorance. If we tolerate social iniquity we do so with full knowledge of the extent of its

evil effects, and its bearing upon the welfare of our Empire and the future of our race. Let us therefore not go down to posterity as the amazing generation to whom knowledge was vouchsafed but who wilfully neglected to turn it to account.

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